

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /073 W

-----040916Z 018626 /15

R 031639Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2305

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMLO PEKING 10

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 2178

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IV, TW

SUBJECT: IVORY COAST' AND CHINA

1. IN MEETING YESTERDAY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER USHER, I ASKED HIM IN LIGHT OF JUST-CONCLUDED CEAUSESCU VISIT TO IVORY COAST AND RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PRC EMBASSY TO BE OPENED IN MONROVIA, WHETHER ANY MODIFICATION WAS BEING CONSIDERED IN IVORY COAST'S POLICY OF EXCLUSIVE RECOGNITION OF TAIPEI.

2. USHER REPLIED THAT, AS WE KNEW, IVORY COAST WAS SLOW TO MODIFY BROAD LINES OF FOREIGN POLICY AND DID NOT BELIEVE IN DOING SO TO ACHIEVE SHORT-TERM ADVANTAGE. HE DID NOT THEREFORE ANTICIPATE ANY MOVE TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEKING IN NEAR FUTURE. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, IVORIANS DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN
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INCREASED CONTACTS WITH A COUNTRY LIKE PRC, WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRC EMBASSY IN ABIDJAN, WHICH WOULD NOT. MY EFFORTS TO DRAW HIM OUT FURTHER ON WHAT KIND OF CONTACTS HE HAD IN MIND ELICITED NOTHING MORE SPECIFIC THAN THE REPEATED STATEMENT THAT HE EXPECTED NO BASIC CHANGE IN GOIC'S CHINA POLICY IN NEAR FUTURE.

3. COMMENT: IVORY COAST IS INDEED SLOW TO INNOVATE IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY AND HOUPHOUET EMPHASIZES BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT GOIC "SUFFERS FROM WEAKNESS OF REMAINING TRUE TO ITS FRIENDS." GRC AMBASSADOR JOEL, WHO HAS BEEN IN ABIDJAN SINCE 1968, IS WELL PLUGGED IN HERE AND HAS GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH WIDE RANGE OF SENIOR IVORIAN OFFICIALS, NOTABLY HOUPHOUET'S HEIR APPARENT, ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT PHILIPPE YACE. FOR THESE REASONS, AS WELL AS TANGIBLE BENEFITS ACCRUING TO IVORY COAST FROM ITS TAIWAN LINK IN TERMS OF AID, TRADE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO SEE GOIC TAKE ANY STEP AT THIS TIME WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE RELATIONS WITH GRC. IF PEKING IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS TRADE AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES--WHICH AT PRESENT ARE RELATIVELY SMALL SCALE--WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EXISTING IVORIAN POLICY, THERE MAY, HOWEVER, BE ROOM FOR INCREASED "CONTACTS" OF THE KIND USHER MENTIONED SO OBLIQUELY. STEARNS

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